

The Sunday School

LESSON 7—MAY 13, 1900

Jesus at the Pharisee's House—Luke 7: 38-50

Golden Text.—Thy faith hath saved thee.—Luke 7: 50

Lesson Thought.—Jesus will save all who come to him in faith, love and penitence.

Time.—In close connection with the last lesson. Summer A. D. 28.

Place.—In some town in Galilee, the place not mentioned, may have been in Capernaum.

Persons.—John the Baptist was in prison at Macherus.

Home Readings

Luke 7: 18-50; Mark 14: 1-9; Rom. 3: 21, 31; Psalm 51: 1-19; Psalm 32: 1-11; I John 4: 9-21; Matthew 18: 23-35. Learn by heart verse 47.

Lesson Text

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And behold, a woman which was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment,

38 And standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins?

50 And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Lesson Links

The last few lessons have been very closely connected. All of them followed closely upon the Sermon on the Mount. For time and place see *Brethren Quarterly* on this lesson.

Lesson Story

As Jesus rebuked the cities where he had done his great miracles of healing, a Pharisee named Simon, perhaps, struck by his bold words and desiring to pay Jesus an honor, invited Christ to dine with him.

Christ and Class Distinction

Jesus immediately accepted the invitation, not to be honored but to honor the Pharisee by an act that would show to him and all such, that the Messiah was the friend of sinners no matter what their worldly position. He ate with publicans and sinners, with Pharisees and rich men without discrimination. And here he sets Christians an example. The Christian or the church which is so exclusive that he will associate with none but those in similar worldly or social circumstances is not true to the example of Him who "went about doing good." Rich men's and poor men's churches are not Christian in that respect. No matter what others may do let the Brethren stand against such wickedness and stand for the common brotherhood of rich and poor, educated and ignorant in Christ Jesus.

Feast Customs

Now, among the Jews feast customs were different from our customs.

1. Among them there was no secrecy about it. Any one could come into the house and look on while the feast was going on, tho only guests sat down at the table.

2. Instead of sitting down around a table, the guests reclined on couches which were almost as high as the table and leaned on their left elbow on the table while they ate with their right. Thus the feet of each guest would be extended toward the wall.

3. It was a work of special honor for the host to wash the feet of a guest, to give him a kiss, to anoint his head with perfumed oil.

The Woman, A Sinner

As they were eating and talking a noted harlot of the city came into the room. Probably she had heard Jesus preach sometime, perhaps, the time when he gave that blessed invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." At any rate she was tired of sin and her shameful life. She came in, stood at Jesus' feet, weeping, doubtless, feeling that this man only in all her life had spoken kindly to her, or had sought to win her to a nobler and better life. O, how often we might help people who are down, if instead of spurning them, we would deal honestly with them and love them for their soul's sake!

As her tears fell upon His feet, she wiped them off with her hair. And in the excess of her penitence and love even kissed the feet of the Master, and poured on them an ointment she brought along.

The Pharisee's Thoughts

All this while Jesus had seemingly paid no attention to the poor woman. Neither his host, Simon the Pharisee. But in the latter's mind were thoughts far different from those in Jesus' mind. As he saw Christ allowing the woman to "defile" Jesus with her tears and touch, he thought that if this great teacher knew what sort of woman this was, he would certainly avoid defilement from her presence and touch. And if Jesus were a

prophet he would know what kind of a character she was.

Christ's Reproof

Jesus knew the man's thoughts. Of course, he knew all about the woman also. But he did not avoid her. So Jesus answered the thoughts of the Pharisee by a story.

Said Jesus, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Say on," said the Pharisee. "There was a lender of money who had two debtors; one owed him \$75 and the other \$7.50. When he learned that neither could pay the debt, he generously forgave them. Now according to your way of looking at it, which would love him most?" Of course the Pharisee never dreamed that Jesus was laying to trap for him. So he carelessly replied, "I suppose that he will love most to whom most was forgiven." And Jesus replied, "You are right."

Then turning to the hitherto unnoticed woman Jesus said? I, the Messiah, entered your house and you did not honor me enough to give me water to wash my feet. But this woman honors me by washing them with her penitential tears and by wiping them with the hairs of her head. You did not think enough of me to give me the kiss customary to be given to honored guests; but this woman, whom you think of as a vile sinner, has not ceased to kiss my feet since I came in here. You did not honor me enough to give me the perfumed anointing on my head, customary to be given to honored guests; but this woman in her deep love for me and her desire to live a better life has anointed my feet with this ointment, which has been one of the essentials of her evil trade. Wherefore, by your argument, I say unto you that her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. You do not feel that your sins need forgiveness, nay, that you have any to be forgiven. Neither do you believe that I can forgive sins; but this poor penitent whom you despise, knows that she is a sinner and desires to have her sins forgiven and believes that I can forgive."

Jesus To The Woman

Then addressing the woman still kneeling, heart-broken at his feet, the merciful Christ said, "Thy sins are forgiven."

O, how the heart of this poor woman must have leaped for joy! Spurned by religious people, hated and despised by all decent people, outlawed by society and reviled by even those who were the partners of her sins, she had found One who really loved her; One, who wanted her to be a woman; One who saw the priceless gem of an immortal soul beneath foul exterior of a blasted life; and One, who had said to her, "Come unto me with your burden of sin, of guilt, of shame, and I will give you rest."

The Cavil of Others

But here again Jesus had run against the prejudices of the dogmatists and iron-clad theologians. "Who is this that pretends to forgive sins as well as God?" they asked